TL1711-2

Message to the United Nations
from Xanana Gusmao, Leader of the National Council
of Maubere Resistance and
Commander of FALINTIL

August 1991

Under the present circumstances it is impossible for me to do anything at the United Nations. Even just going to the United Nations is impossible. Should I dare to do so, I will certainly be murdered. Should I even take a step into the township of Los Palos I will become a sitting duck (for would-be assassins).

Having General Assembly Resolution 37/30 in mind, United Nations Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar promised the Parliamentarians for East Timor delegation when he met them last March that the visit to East Timor of the Portuguese Parliamentarians will take place. We hope that the Secretary-General will continue his efforts for the realization of that visit, and that when the Portuguese Parliamentarians get to visit Timor they will negotiate with the Indonesian Government in Jakarta to resolve the question of Timor.

My hope is that if they are able to come to East Timor to see the true condition prevailing here they would then seek a different framework for the solution of this question.

The United Nations must not forget any party which has a strong interest in solving this problem. The inhabitants of Timor must be considered such a party. It is, therefore, most important that representatives of the East Timorese sit at the conference table. Only when East Timorese representatives are seated at the conference table can the negotiations acquire international recognition and legitimacy. We will never abandon our position on dialogue. We are prepared to hold discussions unconditionally (without introducing new conditions). We are prepared to discuss all issues which will lead to a solution of the problem. We are trusting the UN Secretary-General to convene a meeting of all parties concerned. We believe that the realization of the Portuguese Parliamentarian Mission will prove to be the source of change in knowledge and attitudes regarding the question of East Timor.

Regarding the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait:

Armed aggression brought the same results to both East Timor and Kuwait. It was forced annexation and establishment of an oppressive government by the aggressor country. It is most deplorable that when the international censure of the Iraqi aggression of Kuwait has reached such heights, what is happening to us in East Timor has been forgotten. 'Principles' are often interpreted in terms of the interests of the countries concerned. But if they are universal (international) in the slightest degree, I believe that the principle should be applied equally, whether the country is large

or small, rich or poor.

Regarding the military situation in East Timor:

In the Far Eastern Sector, the Indonesian Battalion 141 composed of 745 Timorese is operating. There is another paramilitary force, which is not a police force, and whose objective is to assist in military operations of the regular army, operating in the same area. We were engaged in combat against them on 25 and 26 July 1991. Battalions 121, 750, 303 and 343 are stationed in Barique, Soibada, Same and Betano for 'Operation El Blanco'. FALINTIL (the East Timor People's Liberation Army) does not have troops stationed in these areas, but moved troops into these areas to cope with the enemy's operation. The objective of 'Operation El Blanco' is to sweep the areas around the concentration camps (relocation camps) and villages clean of all guerillas, so that we will be unable to contact members of the Portuguese Parliamentarian Mission. The Indonesian Government are very afraid of our getting in touch with members of the Portuguese Mission. Our struggle is difficult but we will continue our struggle come what may. We will continue in our fight until pressure from international society will force the Indonesian Government to come to the negotiating table. The activities of the civic organisations have reached the high water mark. We would like to make the most of this situation. We do not believe that armed struggle is a desirable thing. It can only be justified by patriotism.

[These are extracts from a longer message received in Japan early in August by the Free East Timor Coalition. They were transmitted to the UN Special Committee on Decolonisation on 7 August 1991.]